

Summary of Health Disparities Research Resources Applied Research Program

Overview

The Applied Research Program (ARP) is one of five programs in the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. ARP evaluates patterns and trends in cancer-associated health behaviors and risk factors, health care services, economics, and outcomes, including patient-reported outcomes. Measuring social inequalities and monitoring health disparities across the cancer control continuum is integral to ARP's work.

ARP supports three types of research resources that can be used by investigators interested in health disparities:

- Research networks
- Surveys and studies
- Tools for researchers

Research Networks: The Whole Becomes More Than the Sum of its Parts

ARP supports several networks of researchers based in academic institutions and community care settings. These investigators examine health behaviors, services, and outcomes relating to cancer prevention, screening, treatment, and care. The research is designed to allow investigators to examine differences in receipt of services across specific population groups, explore factors that contribute to disparities in outcomes, and identify ways to lessen those disparities.

Examples of Research Networks

- Cancer Research Network (CRN)
<http://crn.cancer.gov>
- Cancer Care Outcomes Research and Surveillance Consortium (CanCORS)
<http://outcomes.cancer.gov/cancors/>
- Breast Cancer Surveillance Consortium (BCSC)
<http://breastscreening.cancer.gov/>

Surveys and Studies: Insights into Behavior, Care, Services, and Outcomes

ARP staff are involved with NCI-funded surveys that gather data about health status and conditions; cancer risk behaviors; access to care; insurance coverage; use of preventive, screening, and other health services; and quality of life.

Several features of these surveys make them particularly valuable resources for studying health disparities. For example, racial and ethnic groups that are not well represented in other surveys are found in large numbers in some of these surveys. This gives researchers an unprecedented opportunity to analyze differences in risk behaviors and receipt of preventive and screening services. Several of these surveys have been fielded in multiple languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and Korean.

ARP also supports cancer registry-based studies on patterns of care, quality of care, and cancer outcomes. These studies examine factors that may contribute to disparities in the receipt of treatment, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, insurance status, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

Examples of Surveys and Studies

- National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Cancer Control Supplement
<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/surveys/nhis/>
- California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) Cancer Control Items
<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/surveys/chis/>
- Patterns of Care/Quality of Care Studies
<http://healthservices.cancer.gov/surveys/poc>
- Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey (TUS-CPS)
<http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/studies/tus-cps/>
- Health, Eating, Activity, and Lifestyle Study (HEAL)
<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/surveys/health/>

Funding Opportunities

Improving Diet and Physical Activity Assessment (R01/R21)

Sponsored by NCI, this Program Announcement supports research to improve the measurement of diet and physical activity among general and specific populations through the development of better instruments, innovative technologies, and/or applications of advanced statistical/analytic techniques.

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-12-198.html>

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-12-197.html>

NCI Scientific Contacts:

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Time-Sensitive Obesity Policy and Program Evaluation (R01)

Co-sponsored by NCI, this Program Announcement establishes an accelerated review/award process to support time-sensitive research to evaluate a new policy or program expected to influence obesity-related behaviors (e.g., dietary intake, physical activity, or sedentary behavior) and/or weight outcomes in an effort to prevent or reduce obesity. It is intended to support research where opportunities for empirical study are, by their very nature, only available through expedited review and funding. All applications must demonstrate that the evaluation of an obesity-related policy and/or program offers an uncommon and scientifically compelling research opportunity that will only be available if the research is initiated with minimum delay. Applications to this announcement are eligible for only one submission.

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-12-257.html>

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Tools for Researchers: Facilitating Investigator Innovation

Research tools developed by ARP staff have facilitated progress in cancer-related epidemiologic, surveillance, and health services research. They have allowed investigators to delve into differences in receipt of cancer services, examine cross-cultural equivalence of survey questions, and improve understanding of risk behaviors and environments across population groups.

Health Disparities Calculator (HD*Calc)

<http://seer.cancer.gov/hdcalc/>

SEER-Medicare Data Linkage

<http://healthservices.cancer.gov/seermedicare/>

Short Dietary Assessment Instruments

<http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/diet/screeners/>

Measures of the Food Environment (MFE)

<https://riskfactor.cancer.gov/mfe/search-publications>

Questionnaire design, cognitive testing techniques, and item response theory modeling techniques

<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/areas/cognitive/guides.html>

For More Information

- ❖ ARP health disparities research
<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/areas/disparities/projects.html>
- ❖ NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities — Training Opportunities for Students and Researchers
<http://crchd.cancer.gov/students/training-opportunities.html>

<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/areas/disparities>